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May 30, 2006

Date

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicants: Aaron DeLong et al.  
Serial No.: 10/711,478  
Filed: September 21, 2004  
Group Art Unit: 3612  
Examiner: Stephen Gordon  
Confirmation No.: 5477  
Title: CONNECTOR HAVING AN INTEGRATED GASKET AND  
METHOD OF MAKING THE SAME  
Attorney Docket: MASL-61

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

May 30, 2006

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

**RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT**

This reply is in response to the Restriction Requirement mailed May 10, 2006. The following remarks are respectfully submitted.

Amendments to the claims begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on Page 5 of this paper.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Original) A connecting member for securing a trim assembly to a support of an automobile, comprising:

a connector body having a first end adapted to couple to the trim assembly and a second end adapted to couple to the support, said connector body having a first hardness; and

a sealing gasket integrally molded with said connector body, said sealing gasket having a second hardness less than the first hardness and adapted to form a seal between the connecting member and the support when the trim assembly is coupled thereto.

2. (Original) The connecting member of claim 1, wherein said connector body is formed from polypropylene.

3. (Original) The connecting member of claim 2, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

4. (Original) The connecting member of claim 1, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

5. (Original) An automotive interior trim assembly for coupling to a support in an automobile, comprising:

a substrate member generally providing structural support for the trim assembly, said substrate member having a front surface adapted to face the interior of the automobile and a back surface adapted to face opposite the front surface; and

a connecting member coupled to the back surface of said substrate member, said connecting member comprising:

a connector body having a first end coupled to said substrate member and a second end adapted to couple to the support, said connector body having a first hardness; and

a sealing gasket integrally molded with said connector body, said sealing gasket having a second hardness less than the first hardness and adapted to form a seal between the connecting member and the support when the trim assembly is coupled thereto.

6. (Withdrawn) The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said connector body is integrally molded with said substrate member.

7. (Original) The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said connector body is formed from polypropylene.

8. (Original) The trim assembly of claim 7, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

9. (Original) The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16 were originally filed in the application and are subject to a restriction requirement. The Examiner has identified Group I as being directed to a trim assembly connecting member and represented by claims 1-9, and Group II as being directed to a method of making and represented by claims 10-16. In response to the restriction, Applicants elect Group I represented by claims 1-9. The non-elected claims 10-16 have been cancelled without prejudice to the filing of one or more divisional applications.

The Examiner has further made a species restriction. The Examiner has identified Species A as being represented by figure 3, and Species B as being represented by figure 4A. Applicants elect Species A represented by figure 3. Applicants submit that claims 1-5 and 7-9 each read on the elected species. Applicants further submit that all these claims are generic. Claim 6 is withdrawn until such time as a generic claim is allowed.

Respectfully Submitted,

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